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ABSTRACT

This booklet describes the University of Hawaii Preschool Language Curriculum which teaches preschool children of multi-ethnic backgrounds to speak English and to use language as a tool for communication, thought, and problem solving. The program was designed to improve both linguistic and cognitive abilities. Sources of more detailed information are provided for this program, specifically, and for Model Programs Childhood Education, in general. (Author/NH)

OE-2015

Model Programs

Childhood Education

University of Hawaii Preschool Language Curriculum

Honolulu, Hawaii

A program of English conversation for preschool children of multi-ethnic backgrounds

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
Elliot L. Richardson, *Secretary*
Office of Education
Terrel H. Bell, *Acting Commissioner of Education*
OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
Donald Rumsfeld, *Director*

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FOREWORD

This booklet is one of 34 in a series of promising programs on childhood education prepared for the White House Conference on Children, December 1970. The series was written under contract by the American Institutes for Research for the Office of Economic Opportunity, and the Office of Child Development and the Office of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Within the broad area of childhood education the series includes descriptions of programs on reading and language development, the disadvantaged, preschool education, and special education. In describing a program, each booklet provides details about the purpose; the children reached; specific materials, facilities, and staff involved; and other special features such as community services, parental involvement, and finances. Sources of further information on the programs are also provided.

As a multiethnic State, Hawaii has a language problem, recently made more serious by Samoan immigration. A few children do not speak English; others are bilingual. Most who do speak English use a nonstandard dialect which does not include some of the English phonemes. Language training was necessary to prepare the children for participation in regular school work.

The Educational Research and Development Center of the University of Hawaii decided to attack the problem by developing a structured language-oriented course accompanied by a parent education program, now known as the University of Hawaii Preschool Language Curriculum (UHPLC). The course was originally influenced by Bereiter and Englemann's *Teaching Disadvantaged Children in the Preschool* and was designed to improve both linguistic and cognitive abilities; often the child had to learn not only the English expression for a concept but also the concept itself.

The program teaches the child to speak English and to "use language as a tool for functional communication, thinking, and problem solving. In general it provides him with a framework for categorizing his world symbolically." Its objectives are to help the child to (1) enlarge his vocabulary, (2) speak in complete sentences, (3) form appropriate questions, (4) correct his own

errors, (5) learn new concepts, and (6) use language in problem solving and reasoning.

A six-level manual was developed, the lowest level of which assumes no knowledge of English. Little by little a series of grammatical structures is presented, starting with simple identity statements such as, "This is a giraffe," and then going on to more difficult constructions such as action, descriptive, and positional statements. These provide the children with patterns into which other words can be fitted in order to express new ideas. Question-and-answer dialogs enable the child to use the newly learned structures, which must be learned thoroughly enough to be psychologically available when needed.

The manual[1] provides detailed instructions for the teacher:

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[1]*University of Hawaii Preschool Language Curriculum Manual*, quoted in Hannah Herman and Dorothy C. Adkins, *Final Report, Hawaii Head Start Evaluation--1968-69*. Honolulu, Hawaii: Education Research and Development Center, January 1970.

Procedure	Lesson
Preparation Present several workers, identifying each as a worker. Then identify the group as workers. Show a series of pictures that depict groups of workers. Practice the plural statement in unison with each picture.	(Baker) T: This is a worker. Say it. C: This is a worker. (Plumber) T: This is a worker. Say it. C: This is a worker. (Policeman) T and C: This is a worker. (Baker, plumber, and policeman) T: These are workers. Say it. C: These are workers. T: Again. . . . (Fireman, doctor, and painter) T: These are workers. Say it. C: These are workers. . . .

In another lesson[2] the child is taught to speak in analogies and to fit new ideas into a given sentence form:

ANALOGY TASK: My turn--Your turn Arrange many picture cards in pairs, some which illustrate color, some which present progressive or past tense statements, some statements with opposite words, and some naming statements. If you make a color statement about the first picture in a pair, then the children should make a color statement about the second picture, and so forth. *(cont. col. 1, P.5)*	(Picture cards arranged in pairs) T: I'm going to show you a picture and tell you something about it. Then I'll show you another picture, and I want you to tell me about it. (Picture of red kite flying) I might show you this card and say, "The kite is flying." Then I might show you a card like this. *(cont. col. 2, P.5)*

[2]Ibid.

Colors--red, blue, yellow *Verbs*--present progressive, past *Labels*--names *Opposite words*--big, clean, straight, cold	(Picture of blue boat sailing) Since I told you what the kite is *doing*, you tell me what the boat is *doing*. Tell me. C: The boat is sailing. C: The boat is floating. T: That's right. Now if I had said, "The kite is red," I'd want you to tell me the *color* of the boat when I show it to you. Let's try it.

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At other times a "plural chant" is used, reminiscent of the method used by Islamic schools for teaching the Koran. This has the advantage of giving the timid child the protection of being only marginally audible, at the same time providing immediate reward when he realizes that his answer is correct or, at least, is the same as that being given by others. An example[3] of the "plural chant" follows.

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[3]Ibid.

Names--Singular and Plural Singular-Plural Chant: Body Parts As you point to a part (or parts) of your body, direct the children to imitate you and to make singular, then plural statements, as appropriate, in a chant, so that the task moves at a fast pace . knee(s) wrist(s) elbow(s) shoulder(s) arm(s) finger(s) heel(s) hand(s) cheek(s) toe(s)	T: Let's talk about different parts of our bodies. When I point to just one part, say, "This is," and when I point to more than one part, say, "These are." Let's go. (Knee) T and C (pointing): This is a knee. This is a knee. (Knees) T: These are knees. . . .

Sample sentences given by the teacher lead to functional sentences produced by the child himself. "I say a sentence about a picture; you say a sentence like that about another picture. The fire truck is near the chair." Then the child is shown another picture, perhaps of a puppy in a basket, and forms his own sentence on the model given by the teacher.

In this language course, one thing ingeniously leads into another. For example, the child is taught, by the use of material objects, the meaning of *long* and *short*: "This pencil is long; this pencil is short." He is then taught the concept of oppositeness. He learns classification by being taught to recognize and name glass, wood, metal, and plastic; then to put all the wooden things in one basket, all the plastic things in another, and so on. He notices that artifacts are often made of combined materials when the teacher says, "Can you find something that is made of glass and plastic?" (A mirror)

Other subjects are taught as part of the language lesson; the child learns the names of numbers and how to tell them from letters. "This is *not* a number. This is a letter." He learns to identify the various coins and a dollar bill. He learns the elements of logic--not to say, "Blue triangles are large" when a

small triangle also is blue. Occasionally the teacher makes an error, to keep the children alert and to encourage them to correct her and themselves. More sophisticated concepts are casually introduced, with no demand being made on the child. When he says, "He is riding a bike," the teacher says, "That's good--you remembered to use a pronoun!"

Gestures and physical activity, such as clapping the hands on the principal word learned, are encouraged. Small groups of four to six children may sit in small chairs, around a table, or on the floor; there is much happy wriggling. While some of the lessons sound suspiciously like drill to an adult, the children obviously enjoy them and are pleased with their own performance.

The phonemes that were not in the linguistic repertoire of the nonstandard dialects locally used have been built into the program. Semistructured language-strengthening activities have been prepared for use after the more rigidly structured lessons.

A COMPANION COURSE FOR PARENTS

A parent-training program was developed concurrently to enable parents to support and augment the language instruction given in the school. Learning materials used in the classroom were

presented to the parents so that similar methods could be used in home teaching; and parents were taught how to make language games to play with the children. Thus the language work given by the school was strengthened, not only by the addition of further language training but also by showing the child that school and home were cooperating to develop his linguistic skills.

LANGUAGE OR ENRICHMENT?

As part of the Head Start Evaluation Program of 1968 and 1969, a more formal experiment was carried out, in which the performance of a group using the University of Hawaii Preschool Language Curriculum was compared with that of a group given a traditional enrichment program. The parental involvement in language training, part of the language curriculum, was balanced by a similar parental involvement course, given to a different group of parents, which emphasized general child-training concepts. The system of variable rewards was used for children in the enrichment groups as well as for those in the language groups.

The experiment involved 149 children (nine dropped out during the year) who attended eight Head Start classes in urban Oahu. When first enrolled they ranged in age from 3 years 8 months to

4 years 8 months. Sixty percent of them were part-Hawaiian or Samoan. Girls outnumbered boys by 84 to 56.

The language curriculum group was given, each day, about 20 minutes of the highly structured language training of the University of Hawaii Preschool Language Curriculum, followed by a similar period of language games, such as *Go Fish* or *Language Lotto*, and by 20 minutes of "application." The entire period of language instruction took only 1 hour.

For the enrichment group, a similar amount of time was spent on the usual preschool activities, such as nature study, candle making, and dramatic play. Books found particularly useful as sources of material were Rachel Carson's *A Sense of Wonder*, A. McCall's *This is Music*, and E. G. Pitcher et al.'s *Helping Young Children Learn*.

The same reinforcement schedule was used for both the language and the enrichment groups--giving concrete reinforcers to the child when he had a certain number of pencil-marks in the teacher's book. These pencil-marks could be earned by correct answers or other desirable conduct, and were always accompanied by praise. The number of pencil-marks per lesson was limited and became fewer

as time went on. Reinforcers included such things as candy, cereal flakes, creepy crawlers, toy cars, and books.

The two parent-training programs were oriented in different directions: one specialized in language and one in general concepts of childhood education. In Parent Program 1 the parent was taught to think of herself as a teacher, fostering the child's cognitive development. She was given specific instructions as to how to go about home teaching. The mothers constructed eight language-supporting games in their workshop sessions and were taught how to extend the child's language experience through conversation. They themselves went through the language curriculum as the course progressed, learning what their children learned and also ways to supplement their children's classwork.

The parents in Parent Program 2, on the other hand, constructed sensory training devices such as feeling boxes and smelling trays; they learned to make wood-scrap sculpture, tissue-paper collages, and bonsai gardens. Later, visual materials such as films were used as a basis of discussion. These dealt chiefly with children, but also with Zen Buddhism and poetry. Verbal problem solving was scheduled for the third phase.

Each parent group met 18 to 20 times per year. The first five involved orientation, in which parents learned the goals and methods of preschool, got acquainted with each other, and overcame their initial timidity.

Three combinations of curriculum and parent training were tried: (1) In three classes in three Head Start centers, the parents of children taking the language curriculum were given Program 1, which emphasized the cognitive training of the child. (2) In three other classes at these centers, the parents of children taking the language curriculum were given Program 2, general training in child development. (3) In two classes at other centers, the parents of children taking the enrichment course were given Program 2. The designers of the experiment felt that the first program, emphasizing cognitive development and the parental teaching role, was too language-oriented to be profitably paired with the enrichment curriculum.

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED AND SOLVED

In the initial study which accompanied the building of the language curriculum, difficulty was encountered with the parents' groups in that attendance had a tendency to taper off. The most effective methods of counteracting this seemed to be team

teaching, role playing, and the use of concrete reinforcers--one piece of stainless-steel flatware per parent per session. The experimenters were not discouraged in regard to the parent training groups, however, since it appeared that parents were effective in aiding their children to develop their vocabulary. The parents' groups were retained as an integral part of the program.

In the second study, the mothers were paid $3 each to cover the cost of transportation and a baby-sitter so that they could attend the training sessions; but the parents, caught in the cost-of-living squeeze, added the money to their general housekeeping funds. It was necessary to provide free transportation for some of the mothers. Infant siblings too young even for Head Start wandered in and out of the meetings and were a disruptive influence when the parent-training sessions were held in schools. Even with the financial inducement, attendance at the training sessions was so poor that when, for research purposes, the parents were divided into high-participation and low-participation groups attendance at one-third of the meetings was set as the criterion for high participation.

A spirit of *esprit de corps* developed during the course of the meetings, which was fostered by expeditions to thrift shops, the

East-West Center (a cultural exhibit dealing with Hawaii's rich ethnic history), and similar points of interest. The mothers greatly enjoyed the outings planned for them and were disappointed when told that they probably could not continue to attend meetings the following year.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Pretests and posttests were given to the children, and the results of the various combinations of child and parent training were statistically assessed.

Comparison of the performance of the different groups on various cognitive tests showed the language curriculum to be clearly superior to the general enrichment curriculum in bringing about improvements in cognitive functions as measured by these tests. It was also found that the children whose mothers were in Program I, which emphasized the parental role in the transmission of language skills, tested higher on measures of language use than children whose mothers had taken the more general course in parent education.

On the Stanford-Binet test, the children in the language classes earned significantly higher IQ scores than those in the

enrichment classes. This was true also of children whose parents did not actively participate in the program, a fact which suggests that the relative efficacy of the language curriculum over the enrichment curriculum is not dependent on parental involvement. Other cognitive tests yielded results generally favorable to the language program.

The Gumpgookies Test, a measure of achievement motivation, is one in which two characters, responding to various situations, show different attitudes, self-estimates, and aspirations. The child is then asked to state which of the Gumpgookies is his Gumpgookie--that is, which one is most like him.

All groups showed a gain on the Gumpgookies Test, although this gain was greater for the combined enrichment groups than for the combined language groups. When the groups are considered individually, the highest gain was for a group taking the language program with parents taking Parent Program #1, the language-support program. The experimenters conclude that "The results suggest that a more structured parent program coupled with a more structured curriculum (in language) has about the same effect on

children's motivation to achieve in school as a less structured parent program coupled with a less structured curriculum."

Audio tapes were taken of the children's spontaneous classroom conversation, and the sentence or phrase length was measured. A slight but significant difference in favor of the experimental group was found.

The influence of the training groups on parental attitudes was measured by interviews and questionnaires given before and after the course of training. No clear differences in the effects of the two types of training programs appeared. The researchers sum up the effects on the parents by saying, "In general, mothers active in either program developed an increased sense of personal power, revealed higher educational and vocational goals for their children, and volunteered more frequently in the Head Start classroom than did inactive mothers." An unmeasured benefit of Program I was that the language games made by the parents were played not only by children in Head Start but also by older and younger siblings.

The chief finding of this study was--if you want a child to learn something, teach him *that*--directly and specifically. A

finding of more practical importance is that significant results were achievable with so little extra teaching--1 hour a day, only a third of it in actual structured teaching, plus, in some cases, whatever the child got from the mother as a result of her occasional attendance at the training courses.

The study is of particular interest in that it deals with a new method rather than with heavier application of the old methods already known to be useful, such as smaller class size, individual instruction, kindness, and parental interest. The language study course provides a new tool for the education of the preschool child. As one teacher who has used it commented, "It provides a sure direction of growth."

Experimentation with the curriculum continues at the University of Hawaii. An attempt is being made to combine the advantages of enrichment and of the language curriculum for the children and to devise a combined, strengthened training program for the parents in which they will learn general child-rearing concepts and at the same time come to regard themselves as transmitters of culture. The fact that the language curriculum takes so small a portion of the day means that it and the teaching of other subjects are not mutually exclusive.

USE OUTSIDE HAWAII?

Applicability of the language study course in other dialect/culture groups is currently being investigated, and it has been informally tried out on Guam. No statistics are available regarding its success, but teachers are enthusiastic.

"It's just like a Christmas present to us," a Guamanian educator said. Guamanian parents reported as the most worthwhile feature of the program the opportunity to talk to the teacher even when the child was not having problems--apparently, talks with the teacher had formerly been regarded as a stress situation. However, the Guam program had the same difficulty as encountered in Hawaii--most of the mothers were "too busy" to attend the training programs or had other reasons for absence. Possibly the hiring of some parents by the project may have made others less willing to contribute their services.

At the Trabajamos Head Start Center in the Bronx, New York, both teachers and parents of Puerto Rican children report satisfaction with the curriculum. The language curriculum has also been tried with Indian and mixed ethnic urban children in Oregon, Negro children in Arkansas, Appalachian children in Tennessee, and Mexican-American children in Los Angeles. Preliminary results are promising for most of these children.

RELEVANT PUBLICATIONS

The report on the development of the language course, entitled *Final Report, Development of a Preschool Language-Oriented Curriculum with a Structured Parent Education Program, December 1968,* by Dorothy C. Adkins et al., is available in microfiche under the code ED 028 845 through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS), The National Cash Register Co., 4936 Fairmont Blvd., Bethesda, Md. 20014.

The official report of the 1970 study is entitled *Final Report, Hawaii Head Start Evaluation--1968-69,* by Hannah Herman and Dorothy C. Adkins. It too can be obtained through EDRS.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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MODEL PROGRAMS--Childhood Education

This is one in a series of 34 descriptive booklets on childhood education programs prepared for the White House Conference on Children, December 1970. Following is a list of the programs and their locations:

The Day Nursery Assn. of Cleveland, Ohio
Neighborhood House Child Care Services, Seattle, Wash.
Behavior Analysis Model of a Follow Through Program, Oraibi, Ariz.
Cross-Cultural Family Center, San Francisco, Calif.
NRO Migrant Child Development Center, Pasco, Wash.
Bilingual Early Childhood Program, San Antonio, Tex.
Santa Monica Children's Centers, Calif.
Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction, Salt Lake City, Utah
Dubnoff School for Educational Therapy, North Hollywood, Calif.
Demonstration Nursery Center for Infants and Toddlers, Greensboro, N.C.
Responsive Environment Model of a Follow Through Program, Goldsboro, N.C.
Center for Early Development and Education, Little Rock, Ark.
DOVACK, Monticello, Fla.
Perceptual Development Center Program, Natchez, Miss.
Appalachia Preschool Education Program, Charleston, W. Va.
Foster Grandparent Program, Nashville, Tenn.
Hartford Early Childhood Program, Conn.
Philadelphia Teacher Center, Pa.
Cognitively Oriented Curriculum, Ypsilanti, Mich.
Mothers' Training Program, Urbana, Ill.
The Micro-Social Preschool Learning System, Vineland, N.J.
Project PLAN, Parkersburg, W. Va.
Interdependent Learner Model of a Follow Through Program, New York, N.Y.
San Jose Police Youth Protection Unit, Calif.
Model Observation Kindergarten, Amherst, Mass.
Boston Public Schools Learning Laboratories, Mass.
Martin Luther King Family Center, Chicago, Ill.
Behavior Principles Structural Model of a Follow Through Program, Dayton, Ohio
University of Hawaii Preschool Language Curriculum, Honolulu, Hawaii
Springfield Avenue Community School, Newark, N.J.
Corrective Reading Program, Wichita, Kans.
New Schools Exchange, Santa Barbara, Calif.
Tacoma Public Schools Early Childhood Program, Wash.
Community Cooperative Nursery School, Menlo Park, Calif.